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MEMORANDUM

TO: Assembly Committee on Transportation

FROM: Douglas Parrott, Legislative Associate

DATE: October 11, 2011

SUBJECT: Assembly Bill 305 (AB 305)

The Wisconsin Counties Association (WCA) knows the ability to move freight as efficiently as possible throughout Wisconsin is important to the state's economy. WCA understands the need for Wisconsin's businesses to be able to compete nationally as well as globally.

The WCA platform has a position opposing increasing allowable truck weights on county roads. However, WCA recognizes that it is a matter of when not if allowable weights on Wisconsin roads will be increased. While we oppose Assembly Bill 305 as currently written, it is our hope the bill could be improved by adding several provisions.

WCA acknowledges the *Wisconsin Truck Size and Weight Study* concluded that trucks carrying 90,000 pounds on six axles causes less impact than a truck carrying 80,000 pounds on five axles. Many local bridges throughout the state unfortunately cannot handle the current allowable weights and are in no condition to handle increased weights. WCA believes that if allowable truck weights will be increased on state and local roads then a priority route analysis needs to be performed to identify what infrastructure on those routes needs to be upgraded.

Once those local bridges and roads are identified it is imperative to upgrade them as quickly as possible to be able to fully utilize the priority routes. WCA believes that a funding source be included in AB 305 to help begin funding those projects. Absent the ability to improve local bridges and deficient roads, counties will be forced to post those roads and bridges and restrict access to avoid a potential dangerous situation. This is a scenario that benefits no one.

While WCA opposes AB 305 as currently written, we believe the bill can be improved to a point that lessens the impact on county infrastructure. WCA appreciates Chairman Petrowski and the Department of Transportation asking WCA for input on this issue and we look forward to continuing to work with the Chairman and DOT on addressing the issue of improving the local infrastructure and identifying priority routes. WCA will be attending the Governor's Freight Summit in November and intends to be a part of the solution to these issues.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

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To: Assembly Committee on Transportation

From: Richard J. Stadelman, Executive Director

Re: AB 305 relating to overweight permits for vehicles carrying sealed containers or vehicles in international trade

AB 306 relating to vehicles carrying certain agricultural products

Date: October 10, 2011

Wisconsin Towns Association does not oppose AB 305 relating to overweight permits for vehicles carrying sealed containers or vehicles in international trade, nor AB 306 relating to certain vehicles carrying certain agricultural products. This memo is intended to provide information as to the effect on local highways including town and village highways.

Both of these bills would authorize increased maximum weights on the vehicles described in the bills to a maximum of 90,000 pounds for those vehicles containing an extra axle or axles. The Wisconsin Truck Size and Weight Study (completed in June, 2009) established that the impact on highway surfaces by vehicles with an additional axle or axles carrying 90,000 pounds is no greater than currently permitted vehicles with lesser axles carrying 80,000 pounds. Therefore AB 305 and AB 306 should not have an increased impact, in principle on highway surfaces than currently permitted vehicles. We understand the desire to have the Wisconsin trucking industry and the industries they serve to be as competitive as possible with neighboring states.

AB 305 and AB 306 do not take away any authority of local jurisdictions to impose weight limits on their local highways and bridges. It is very important that local jurisdictions retain this authority, in particular under Sec. 349.16 of Wis. Statutes to impose seasonal and special weight limits on local highways when needed in the opinion of the local highway authorities.

In addition, while AB 305 and AB 306 is intended to permit increased weights on state highways, it needs to be recognized that these types of vehicles may need to make picks and final delivery on local highways, off the state system. Of concern is that many local bridges on town, village, city and county highways are not in condition to carry the increased weight of 90,000 by a single vehicle. We recognize that neither AB 305 nor AB 306 are intended to permit these overweight vehicles on local bridges, nor take away local authority to post local bridges with lesser weight limits. Increasing weight limits on state highways may however have the potential for some of these vehicles crossing local bridges.

For all the reasons stated above, Wisconsin Towns Association does not oppose AB 305 nor AB 306, but wants to note that there may be unintended impacts on local bridges. We hope that the state legislature remembers these potential impacts in future funding decisions for local highways and bridges.